

VZCZCXRO7474
PP RUEHIK
DE RUEHTA #0158/01 0361014
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 051014Z FEB 10
FM AMEMBASSY ASTANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7357
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE 2429
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1789
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2495
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 1405
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFAAA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC 1986
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC 1834
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEHAST/AMCONSUL ALMATY 2258
RUEAWJL/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RHMCSUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC 0072

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 04 ASTANA 000158

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR INL/AAE, G/TIP, SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ELAB](#) [SMIG](#) [SOCI](#) [KCRM](#) [KTIP](#) [UZ](#) [KZ](#)

SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND AN NGO JOIN FORCES TO
OFFER TIP VICTIM PROTECTION IN ASTANA

ASTANA 00000158 001.3 OF 004

1. (U) Sensitive but Unclassified. Not for public internet.

2. (SBU) SUMMARY: Prior to a February 3 press conference to discuss joint Kazakshtan-U.S. efforts to combat trafficking-in-persons (TIP), Charge and INL Officer visited the newly-opened, government-funded TIP shelter operated by local NGO Korgau-Astana. The shelter differs greatly from the privately-funded Almaty TIP shelter that INL Officer visited in December 2009, although each shelter has its own strengths and weaknesses. Victims need services in both of Kazakhstan's two major cities. The Astana shelter offers a promising new avenue of cooperation between NGOs and the national government on anti-TIP efforts. END SUMMARY.

THE FUTURE OF GOVERNMENT-FUNDED SHELTERS

3. (SBU) The Astana shelter was opened in September 2009 by local NGO Korgau-Astana, with funding from a Ministry of Justice (MOJ) three-year grant, which provides for both the development of a TIP shelter network and a pilot shelter in Astana. The government plans to open similar shelters in other regions of Kazakhstan as soon as shelter standards are developed.

4. (U) INL Officer has met on several occasions with the Anna Ryl, the Director of Korgau-Astana Director, and the NGO's attorney Olga Ryl, who is also the Director of the NGO Pravo and Anna's mother. Korgau-Astana was the only applicant from Astana for the MOJ grant, though the tender was announced twice. The first tender received applications from only two NGOs in Karaganda. Korgau-Astana has strong connections in the government through Olga Ryl, a former police officer who worked in counter-narcotics divisions throughout most of her 30-year-career. She helped draft the current counter-narcotics law and established the first government drug rehabilitation centers in Kazakhstan.

5. (SBU) The MOJ grant includes the development of standards for shelters for all victims of violence, including TIP victims, throughout Kazakhstan. The government expects the Astana shelter to be a model facility and is pinning its hopes on Olga Ryl to help

develop the necessary legal standards based on her experience drafting legislation for drug rehabilitation centers.

¶6. (SBU) Although pleased by the government's efforts overall, some local NGO representatives who asked not to be identified wondered how a newly-formed NGO was able to receive an MOJ grant, and doubted that Korgau-Astana has relevant TIP experience. In fact, one NGO network with no previous members in Astana refused to accept Korgau-Astana's membership. The president of that network and a member complained to INL Officer that the government does not appropriately vet grant applications and only looks for the cheapest alternatives with no consideration of an NGO's experience or the quality of the service for recipients.

ASTANA TIP SHELTER

¶7. (SBU) The Astana shelter is a house located in a quiet, working-class residential section of Astana. It has a modern kitchen, one bathroom, a large living room with a small office, two bedrooms with four beds each, and a bedroom for two. The director, a psychologist, a social worker, an attorney, a victim advocate, an accountant, and two guards work in the shelter. One additional employee answers the shelter's hotline.

¶8. (SBU) During its first five months, the shelter's hotline (telephone number +7 7172 509 509) received 112 phone calls, 43 of which involved trafficking in persons. The Astana shelter has assisted 24 trafficking victims since its establishment; victims typically stay in the shelter for two to three months. Victims have been sent to the shelter by the police and by churches, and some are identified through the shelter's hotline or found in the street by social workers.

ASTANA 00000158 002.3 OF 004

¶9. (SBU) Shelter personnel also work to combat trafficking. For example, during a victim's stay in the shelter, employees collect information about traffickers, pimps, and the locations of brothels. Employees have identified 167 apartments used as brothels and determined that an individual pimp earns approximately \$200,000 a year. This information has been placed into a database, which the NGO plans to give to police officials. However, the NGO is carefully looking for a trustworthy interlocutor among the police. The NGO has not yet revealed the location of the shelter even to local police and sends a driver to pick up victims identified by law enforcement authorities.

AFTER THE NIGHTMARE, AN URGE TO LIVE

¶10. (SBU) At the time of the Charge's visit, two young women were in the shelter:

-- A 17-year-old with a 5-day-old infant, who had lived in Astana with her grandmother until she turned 15. Because of difficulties with her parents, she had lived with her grandmother. After her grandmother's death, she briefly returned to her parents' house for a while. She ran away from home and met a young man who turned out to be a pimp. She worked for him for almost a year. She reported that pimps used rented apartments and changed locations every three days. She got pregnant at the age of 16, but was forced to work until her eighth month of pregnancy. She went into premature labor because of the burden of five to seven clients a day at which point the boyfriend/pimp threw her out of the apartment. A social worker found her in the street and took her to a hospital. The pimp found her and attempted to discharge her, but the doctors kept her in the hospital. The baby was born without observable health problems.

-- A 21-year-old-girl from Shymkent was trafficked by her boyfriend while she was attending a university in Almaty. The boyfriend was attending the same university, but worked as a pimp in the evening. He first sold her to his friends, but was later sold four times to different pimps. During an armed altercation between pimps, she and another girl jumped out of a window to escape and broke her leg. When shelter personnel attempted to return her to her family in Shymkent, they refused to accept her because she had been a prostitute. Her sisters refuse to speak to her and do not allow her

to communicate with her parents. She is recovering at the shelter and plans to resume her education.

¶11. (SBU) Shelter personnel also shared the story of an Uzbek girl who escaped from the same brothel as the 21 year old victim. She arrived at the shelter, desperately ill and emaciated; she weighed only 70 pounds. Doctors believed that, had she not escaped, she would have succumbed to her illness. At the age of 15 she was forced to marry a 30-year-old from her village. Her uncle and his friends raped her and sold her to a pimp. She was locked in apartments for two years until her escape. The girl had been willing to risk escape because she feared that she would soon die anyway. Shelter personnel found the girl's brother, who was willing to accept her. However, the night before she was to leave the shelter, she used manicure scissors to destroy her new clothes in the hope that she would not have to leave the shelter. She received psychological treatment before they attempted to send her home again.

ALMATY TIP SHELTER OFFERS VOCATIONAL TRAINING

¶12. (SBU) Local NGO Rodnik has operated a TIP shelter in Almaty since 2005. Originally, the shelter was funded through a USAID grant to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) which expired in March 2008. The shelter has a director, a coordinator, a psychologist, and three social workers. The shelter is in a one-bedroom apartment, but can accommodate as many as six victims. The shelter provides medical, psychological, legal assistance and vocational training to victims of trafficking. Currently the shelter receives limited funding from the Embassy of the Netherlands through IOM to pay for utilities, food, and clothing. Salaries are

ASTANA 00000158 003.3 OF 004

funded by a local government social program, which has to be approved annually.

¶13. (SBU) INL Officer and INL/AAE Desk Officer visited the Almaty shelter in December 2009. At that time, there was one victim in the shelter who was to be reunited with her family. The shelter had no additional security and was on the first floor of the building. The neighbors were aware of the shelter's presence in the building and not only accepted, but protected it. The presence of the shelter was only revealed to the neighbors after they had mistaken it for a brothel and called the police.

¶14. (SBU) Rodnik has made agreements with vocational training schools, such as cooking, hairdressing, and manicuring schools, to provide free training for victims. Victims also make crafts, which the NGO hopes to begin selling to support the shelter.

¶15. (SBU) Because it is in the south, the Almaty shelter receives many victims from Uzbekistan and has connections through IOM with an NGO in Tashkent. The NGO in Tashkent accepts victims who are deported or choose to return to Uzbekistan. The NGO does not track victims after they have left the shelter, because many victims do not want to be reminded of what happened to them. However, some victims do stay in touch with the NGO.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ASTANA AND ALMATY

¶16. (SBU) There are many differences between the shelters in Astana and Almaty, including their age, location, funding streams and management philosophy. For example, the location of the Almaty shelter is well known to local police while Korgau-Astana keeps its location hidden from law enforcement. Korgau-Astana has plans to expand its serves, but at the moment provides primarily emergency assistance Korgau-Astana hopes to develop a two-tier shelter program in which victims are first housed in a secure shelter at on arrival and, when ready, move to a more open shelter that provides vocational training and rehabilitation. Rodnik provides vocational training and rehabilitation in a single shelter. Rodnik does not provide separate beds to its victims, but provides convertible furniture. The director of the Almaty shelter believes that victims must be kept active and that providing separate beds would encourage victims to attempt to escape their problems by sleeping for long periods. Both shelters rely heavily on international or government

funding and cooperate closely with the U.S. government.

PRESS CONFERENCE

¶17. (U) On February 3, the Charge invited senior officials from the Ministries of Justice and Interior and representatives from Korgau-Astana to participate in a press conference at the Embassy in recognition of National Freedom Day. Speakers at the press conference discussed joint Kazakhstan-U.S. programs to combat trafficking-in-persons, protect victims, and prevent at-risk groups from being victimized by traffickers.

¶18. (U) In his remarks at the press conference, Vice-Minister of Justice Marat Bekatayev noted that the Astana TIP Shelter was funded by the government as a pilot shelter, and said that a network of TIP shelters will be established throughout Kazakhstan in the future. Sultan Kusetov, Chairman of the Ministry of Interior's Criminal Police Committee, reported that in 2009, police cracked down on TIP as they initiated 58 cases of human trafficking, including 20 cases of trafficking in persons, 16 cases of trafficking in minors, eight cases of kidnapping for the purpose of exploitation, seven cases of false imprisonment for the purpose of exploitation, and seven cases of forcing another into prostitution. The police also initiated 212 cases of pimping and maintaining brothels.

¶19. (SBU) COMMENT: INL has worked closely with Kazakhstan to promote victim assistance through study trips to Italy and Vladivostok, Russia, where delegations examined the establishment

ASTANA 00000158 004.3 OF 004

and operation of government-funded shelters. The Ministry of Justice's funding of the Korgau-Astana NGO is a direct result of that effort. With a shelter established in Astana, INL plans to work with the government and shelter personnel to provide management training in shelter operation and legislation development. Once similar shelters are opened throughout Kazakhstan, INL will provide regional training seminars. Although some NGOs have doubts about Korgau-Astana, INL believes it fills an important need and represents a promising step towards more cooperation between the national government and NGOs in victim protection. We will continue to encourage the anti-TIP NGOs to accept multiple models as effective and work together and learn from each other's experiences.

END COMMENT.

SPRATLEN